

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

Amendments to Appendices I and II of CITES

Twelfth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Santiago (Chile), 3 – 15 November 2002

A. PROPOSAL

Deletion of *Cnemidophorus hyperythrus* from Appendix II.

B. PROPONENT

United States of America.

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1.1 Taxonomy

1.1.1 Class: Reptilia

1.2 Order: Squamata

1.3 Family: Teiidae

1.4 Species: *Cnemidophorus hyperythrus*, Cope 1863.

Subspecies described: *C. h. hyperythrus*, Cope 1863.

C. h. beldingi, Stejneger 1894

C. h. pictus, Van Denburgh and Slevin 1921

1.5 Scientific synonyms

C. h. hyperythrus

Verticaria hyperythra, Cope 1869

Cnemidophorus hyperythra, Garman 1884

Verticaria beldingi, Stejneger 1894

Verticaria hyperythra beldingi, Van Denburgh 1895

Cnemidophorus beldingi, Boulenger 1898

Cnemidophorus sexlineatus, Mocquard 1899

Verticaria hyperythra beldingi, Cope 1900

Verticaria hyperythra hyperythra, Stejneger 1917

Cnemidophorus hyperythrus beldingi, Grinnell 1917

Verticaria caerulea, Dickerson 1919

Verticaria hyperythra schmidtii, Van Denburgh and Slevin 1921

Verticaria espiritensis, Van Denburgh and Slevin 1921

Verticaria franciscensis, Van Denburgh and Slevin 1921

C. h. pictus

Verticaria picta, Van Denburgh 1921

C. h. beldingi

Verticaria sericea, Van Denburgh 1895

Cnemidophorus sericeus, Ditmars 1907

1.6 Common names

English: orange-throated whiptail lizard, orange-throated racerunner

Spanish: corredor gorguinaranja, huico garganta-anaranjada

French: coureur à gorge orange

1.7 Code Numbers:

2. Biological Parameters

2.1 Distribution

The orange-throated whiptail is limited to southwestern California, United States of America (U.S.A.) and the peninsula of Baja California, Mexico, including seven islands in the Gulf of California (Carmen, Espíritu Santo, Monserrate, Partida Coronados, San Francisco, San José, and San Carlos) and two islands (Magdalena and Santa Margarita) in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Baja California, Mexico (Thompson et al. 1998). There are three subspecies of *Cnemidophorus hyperythrus*: *C.h. hyperythrus* (Cape orange-throated whiptail), *C. h. beldingi* (Belding orange-throated whiptail), and *C. h. pictus* (Monserrate Island orange-throated whiptail) (Wright 1993, Thompson et al. 1998). *Cnemidophorus h. hyperythrus* occurs in the State of Baja California del Sur, Mexico. *Cnemidophorus h. beldingi* is found in the foothills and mountains of Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Orange, Riverside, and San Diego counties, State of California, U.S.A., and the State of Baja California del Norte, Mexico. *Cnemidophorus h. pictus* is restricted to the Island of Monserrate, State of Baja California del Sur, Mexico.

2.2 Habitat availability

The majority of suitable habitat for *C. hyperythrus* occurs in the chaparral (both open and dense vegetation areas) and coastal sage scrub ecosystems. In the U.S.A., the primary threat to *C. h. beldingi* is loss of suitable contiguous habitat in southern California, particularly in San Diego County, as a direct result of urban, commercial, and agricultural development. By 1994, an estimated 75% of former *C. h. beldingi* habitat had been destroyed due to development (Jennings and Hayes 1994). The remaining stronghold for this subspecies appears to be the pinyon-juniper habitat type, where *C. h. beldingi* has been found at elevations of approximately 6,000 ft. This subspecies has not been located at higher elevations in mixed conifer forests (McGurty 1980).

In Mexico, the species is threatened primarily by habitat destruction (Benítez-Díaz 2001). Based on habitat preference, it is estimated that 80,000 km² of area are available or may be inhabited by *C. hyperythrus* (Benítez-Díaz 2001).

2.3 Population status

The current population status of *C. hyperythrus* in California is unknown. However, in 1980, McGurty described the status of this subspecies in San Diego County as “seriously depleted.” In Mexico, surveys of *C. hyperythrus* have been conducted for three years on the islands of Carmen, Coronados, and Monserrate in the Gulf of California. The species is considered to be abundant on these three islands and populations have remained stable. Population surveys for populations in other islands or the Baja California Peninsula are not available. An informal

report indicates that the species is extremely abundant in Baja California (L.L. Grismer, pers. comm. 2002).

2.4 Population trends

See Population status above.

2.5 Geographic trends

See Habitat availability above.

2.6 Role of the species in its ecosystem

Bostic (1964) and Stebbins (1972) observed that the distribution of *C. h. beldingi* correlated with the distribution of the western subterranean termite *Reticulitermes hesperus* which is restricted to the lower coastal slopes.

2.7 Threats

Although Grismer (pers. comm., 2002) has suggested that this species has no significant threats, both U.S. and some Mexican populations of the species have been affected by habitat destruction (see Habitat availability above). U.S. populations of *C. h. beldingi* are further threatened by a short season of activity (adults enter into hibernation as early as July) and low reproductive potential (Grismer, pers. comm. 2002). Mexican populations inhabiting the islands in the Gulf of California and the Pacific Ocean are threatened by exotic species, primarily predators (Benítez-Díaz 2001).

3. Utilization and Trade

3.1 National utilization

No legal or illegal trade in this species is documented in either the United States or Mexico.

3.2 Legal international trade

Documented international trade in *C. hyperythrus* since 1980 has been very limited. It has included the import of 156 live specimens by the United States from Mexico since 1980, export of 25 live specimens by the United States to Japan in 1996, export of 11 scientific specimens by Mexico to the United States in 1996, and export of 96 live specimens by the United States to Hong Kong in 1997 (World Conservation Monitoring Centre 2001; Table 1).

Table 1. Number of specimens of <i>Cnemidophorus hyperythrus</i> in international trade between 1980 and 2000.		
Year	No. of Specimens Exported	No. of Specimens Imported
1980		37
1985		112
1996	36	7
1997	96	
TOTAL	132	156

3.3 Illegal trade

There is no known illegal trade in this species in the United States or Mexico.

3.4 Actual or potential trade impacts

Neither domestic nor international trade constitute a threat for populations of the species in the United States or Mexico.

2.5 Captive breeding or artificial propagation for commercial purposes (outside country of origin)

No private or commercial breeders are known to have bred this species.

4. Conservation and Management

4.1 Legal status

3.1.1 National

Cnemidophorus hyperythrus is designated a “California Species of Concern” (CSC) by the State of California. Permits to collect and/or possess CSC’s are only granted for scientific purposes. Additionally, the sale of all native lizards in California is prohibited, and permits for the sale of native reptiles by biological supply houses to scientific and educational institutions must be permitted by the California Department of Fish and Game. As a “Species of Concern”, there is a State requirement (California Environmental Quality Act) to evaluate the impact of proposed projects on the habitats of the orange-throated whiptail lizard. “Species of Concern” are also addressed in Natural Community Conservation Plan efforts.

In Mexico, some populations of the species are listed as “Threatened” and others as “Rare” (Benítez-Díaz 2001). Although there are no protected areas for this species in the Baja California Peninsula, many island populations are found within protected nature reserves.

4.1.2 International

Because of its listing in Appendix II of CITES, the orange-throated whiptail is also included in Annex B of Regulation EC 2724/2000.

4.2 Species management

3.1.1 Population monitoring

No specific population monitoring program for this species exist in the United States. In Mexico, surveys of *C. hyperythrus* have been conducted for three years on the islands of Carmen, Coronados, and Monserrate in the Gulf of California. Population surveys for populations in other islands or the Baja California Peninsula are not available.

4.2.2 Habitat conservation:

No habitat has been specifically protected for this species, although many island populations in Mexico are found within protected nature reserves.

4.2.3 Management measures:

The collection/harvest of *Cnemidophorus hyperythrus* for commercial trade is prohibited in California and Mexico. There are no existing or anticipated planned harvests of this species.

4.3 Control measures:

4.3.1 International trade

See Domestic measures below.

4.3.2 Domestic measures:

California Department of Game and Fish and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service law enforcement officers enforce collecting regulations and laws. The California Department of Game and Fish requires permits to collect and/or possess these species; these permits are only granted for scientific purposes. Exportation from the United States requires a declaration form to establish legal collection.

Mexican populations of *C. hyperythrus* listed as “rare” require a permit for their collection and exportation outside the country.

5. Information on Similar Species

The orange-throated whiptail could possibly be confused with the Baja California whiptail, *Cnemidophorus labialis*, which is similar in size and coloration. The Baja California whiptail always has at least six light dorsal stripes (usually seven or eight); in areas of range overlap, the orange-throated whiptail has fewer than six stripes. The western whiptail (*C. tigris*) has only vague striping (if any) and a spotted or mottled pattern. Without prior experience or an identification chart in hand it could be difficult for a non-expert to tell the whiptails apart. To help identify between these two species, non-experts can use the descriptions and drawings of a field guide (e.g. Stebbins 1985).

Since there is little known trade in *C. hyperythrus*. We anticipate there would be no effect on other whiptails due to misidentification.

6. Other Comments

Mexico, the only other range country for this species, was consulted with regard to this proposal. Mexico supports the proposal.

7. Additional Remarks

None.

8. References

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